AgFuture

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New Leaders for 2020

SOUTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
VOLUME: 2 ISSUE: 3 2020

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From Our SC FFA President

Hello FFA members, advisors and supporters. I am Kylie Cathcart, and I am serving as your 2019-20 State FFA President. I am a freshman Agricultural Education major at Clemson University from the Lexington-Richland 5 FFA Chapter. On behalf of the 2019-20 state officer team I am excited to welcome you all as we enter a new year in the FFA. My fellow officers and I have kept plenty busy since State Convention this past June. We have traveled all over the state for training and conferences and even had the opportunity to deepen our leadership in Washington D.C. and Indianapolis, Ind. As a team we have been hard at work learning how to best lead and serve South Carolina FFA members this year. We have had the opportunity to meet some of you already this year, but we want to reach out and get to know as many of you as possible. One of our favorite things is meeting and working with students, so reach out and stay connected. We want to know about your chapter and keep up with your FFA experience. A great way to connect with us is through our social media. Follow us at SCFFAOfficers on both Facebook and Instagram. We will be sharing our journey as state officers and keeping an eye out for what you are up to as well. Wherever you are in your FFA career we want to help and support you along the way. As a state officer team we want you to know that we are here for you and want to serve you the best we can. We are excited to see what you all accomplish over this next year and are honored that we get to be a part of your journey. I am looking forward to another amazing year and cannot wait to meet you all!

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SC FFA Officers

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92nd State FFA Convention

By Jillian Lash

Over 900 South Carolina FFA members swarmed the Brooks Center for the Performing Arts on Clemson University's campus for the 92nd SC FFA State Convention on June 12-14. Members came to compete in multiple Career Development Events (CDE), Leadership Development Events (LDE) and to recognize those who strive to achieve excellence within the FFA organization.

During the First General Session, the Pendleton JROTC posted the colors, the National Anthem was sung by Sydney McCurry from the Abbeville FFA Chapter and Philip Rhodes, the 2017-18 State FFA President, gave the invocation after the State Officers presented their reflection. The CDE and LDE winners from this past year were recognized for their achievement, followed by Amanda Taylor, who presented her retiring address "Are You Enough?". The session concluded with 195 FFA members being presented their State FFA Degrees.

At the Second General Session, the FFA was formally welcomed to Clemson University by Keith Belli, dean of the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences. During this session, the SC FFA celebrated the 50th anniversary of women in the FFA with a video highlighting South Carolina female FFA members, both past and present. The retiring address of State Vice President Emily McDaniel titled "Dare You to Move" immediately followed the video. Eleven outstanding chapters were recognized during the National Chapter and Governor's Citation presentations. Individual FFA members were recognized for receiving thousands of dollars' worth of scholarships for their hard work in school and with their Supervised Agriculture Experience. Appreciation was expressed to the SC Farmer and Agribusiness Association, National FFA, the SC FFA Foundation and the SC Fertilizer and Agrichemicals Association for their continued support of the SC FFA. Motivational speaker Richie Contartesi addressed the crowd as the keynote speaker for the evening.

FFA members receives a free jacket from the State Officer Gift of Blue program

Thursday morning began with members competing in the ten State CDE and LDE events that were conducted on the Clemson University campus. Those not competing in CDEs had the opportunity to attend a workshop presented by National FFA Vice President Adrian Schunk.

At the Third General Session, held on Thursday evening, 11 members were recognized as candidates for the American FFA Degree. This is the highest degree the National FFA offers. The Honorary State FFA Degree was bestowed to 10 adults that have supported the South Carolina FFA Association. In addition, FFA members were recognized for their Supervised Agriculture Experience project during the "FFA Stars over South Carolina presentation." Payton Busbee and Jessie Comer presented their retiring addresses. The session ended with a keynote presentation by Schunk. After the session everyone was invited to Pickens County Career and Technology Center for a night of ice cream, games, music and friends.

The Convention concluded on Friday morning with the Fourth General Session where 43 chapters received awards for having 75% -100% membership. On behalf of Hugh Weathers, South Carolina's commissioner of agriculture, his staff made a special presentation as one chapter, that registered 10 or more members, was randomly selected to be a special guest at a dinner which he would host. The session also included the honoring of 25 members as State Proficiency Award winners, announced the convention CDE and LDE winners and concluded with the announcement of six FFA members who will serve as the 2019-2020 State Officer Team.

The 2018-19 State FFA Officer team is to be commended for their commitment, optimism and excellence. It was a great year and a very successful state convention.

FFA Members Provide Over 34,000 Meals to Those in Need

By Jillian Lash

FFA members from around the state spent much of their free time on Thursday afternoon of the State FFA Convention to help those in need in South Carolina. The SC FFA partnered with Meals of Hope to pack 34,560 meals, all of which were donated to the Harvest Hope Food Bank in Greenville.

The FFA organization believes strongly in the fourth line of the FFA motto 'Living to Serve,' which is why 233 South Carolina FFA members volunteered to pack meals. This event gave students from across the state the opportunity to work together to make a positive difference in the lives of those in need within the state.

The Mission of Meals of Hope is: "To inspire and empower communities to come together to end hunger." They believe that their job is to feed people. Meals of Hope is currently the only packaging organization whose priority is keeping the food packed within the United States. Each year, over 25,000 volunteers and 13 full-and part-time staff members assist Meals of Hope in achieving its mission. For more information, go to https://mealsofhope.org/.

State Stars

By Jason Gore

The 2019 SC FFA Star Farmer is Cody Clary from the Saluda FFA Chapter. Cody owns and operates Red Line Cattle Company, where he maintains a herd of registered Red Angus and Simmental cross cattle. Cody takes great pride in producing quality cattle and utilizes best management practices as part of his operation. In addition to Red Line, Cody works with Claryville Farms, where he assists in reproductive management and hay production. He further assists with poultry house operations by walking houses and assisting with feeding. Cody is an active member in his community and the livestock industry. In addition to raising cattle, Cody shows cattle and participates in numerous FFA and 4H livestock and equine events. He regularly volunteers with community events and is a member of the Cut Above Beef Club and the Saluda County Cattleman's Association. His FFA advisor is Amanda Crouch.

The 2019 SC FFA Star in Placement is Ryan Rucker from the Pelion FFA Chapter. Ryan is employed by Rucker Farms in Pelion. Rucker Farms is a 6,100-acre row crop farm, producing corn, cotton, peanuts, and soybeans. Ryan is responsible for a number of tasks on the farm including planting, spraying, harvesting and equipment maintenance. In order to increase farm efficiency and reduce environmental impacts, Ryan utilizes a number of technologies on the farm including GPS navigation and Auto Track Steering. In addition to farm operations, Ryan is an active member of his FFA chapter and local community, volunteering at numerous town and church events and competing in multiple state FFA CDEs including Soil Evaluation, Agronomy and Tractor Operations. His FFA advisors are Frank Stover Jr. and Jesse Zeaser.

The 2019 SC FFA Star in Agriscience is Chance Parker from the Pendleton FFA Chapter. Chance is the farm manager at Big Oaks Boarding Stables, a boarding and training operation in Anderson. At Big Oaks, Chance is responsible for a number of tasks including feeding and caring for boarded horses. Chance ensures all horses receive individualized feed rations, including any necessary supplements or medications. Chance is also responsible for barn and equipment organization and management. He further assists with riding lessons and camps throughout the year and helped expand the existing barn to increase boarding capacity. Chance is an active member of his local FFA Chapter, attending numerous workshops and camps and participating in multiple career development events. He is also a member of the Big Oak Saddle Club and No Business Racing. His FFA advisors are Blake Berry and Katie Gilson.

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SCC SPARTANBURG COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SC FFA Member Wins National Agriscience Competition

By Lee Pettigout, Fort Mill FFA Chapter Advisor

Cayden Gates of the Nation Ford FFA Chapter in Fort Mill, is the National Agriscience Fair winner of the Animal Systems area, Division 5. Cayden's project consisted of supplementing a mixed flock of laying hens' water with Astaxanthin, which occurs naturally in bodies of water, such as the common bird bath. Astaxanthin is an antioxidant, which has been proven to be beneficial to human health. Eggs were sampled prior to and after the introduction of Astaxanthin. Cayden teamed with Eric Birgbaugher, professor of biology, at Winthrop University, to test the protein content in the eggs which were laid after the supplement was introduced. The collaboration between Nation Ford FFA and Winthrop University's Biology Department allowed Cayden to utilized lab space and equipment, such as the photospectrometer, which would normally not be available to a high school student. The research showed promise in using Astaxanthin in laying hens' diets in order to increase the protein content of their eggs, thus discovering another avenue for the beneficial properties of Astaxanthin for humans. Cayden is curious to continue this research to determine if Astaxanthin may have the same effect on other products from food animals. Special thanks goes to King's Landing Farm in Rock Hill (Joe and Mary Sandy) for their support of Cayden's research, allowing him free access to their laying flock.

Back row (L to R): Jake Faulkner (Indian Land FFA), Luther Altman (Aynor FFA), Brandon Craig (Aynor FFA), Zachery Vorp (Aynor FFA), Brandon Floyd (Aynor FFA), Allyson Sanford (Swansea FFA).
Front row (L to R): Mackenzie Jones (Anderson FFA), Holden Turner (Aynor FFA), Callie Barnhill (Aynor FFA), Kendall Herring (Aynor FFA), Mariah Swygert (Batesburg-Leesville FFA)

Eleven SC FFA Members Earn the American FFA Degree

By Jillian Lash

The highest degree achievable within the National FFA Organization is the American FFA Degree. This honor shows an FFA member's dedication to his or her chapter and state FFA Association. It demonstrates the effort FFA members apply toward their supervised agricultural experience and outstanding leadership abilities and community involvement they exhibited through their FFA career.

Dr. George Askew Receives the Honorary American FFA Degree

By Jillian Lash

Each year at the National FFA Convention and Expo, those who have made outstanding contributions to the FFA are honored with the Honorary American FFA Degree. This honor is for individuals who have provided exceptional service to the National and State FFA Association and agriculture education.

Dr. George Askew, Vice President of Clemson University Public Service and Agriculture, has been instrumental in supporting South Carolina FFA and Agriculture Education. Under Dr. Askew's leadership, the Agricultural Education program was transferred from Clemson University faculty to Clemson Cooperative Extension. Since that time, the agricultural education staff has grown to add additional staffing, and the program was restructured to provide more visibility and receive more support for Agricultural Education and the SC FFA. Due to this additional support, the SC FFA Association has become more productive on the national level, to include: increase in FFA membership, increased participation in national events, increased recognition on the national level and the election of the first National FFA Officer from SC in over 40 years. Dr. Askew has received his Honorary State FFA Degree and is an active member of numerous agricultural related boards around the state.

92nd National FFA Convention Sets Record Attendance

By Jillian Lash

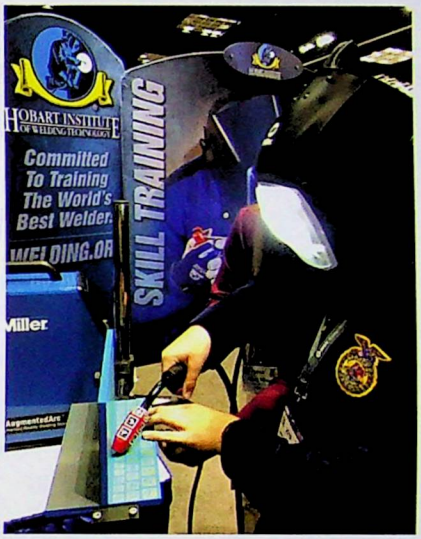
The 92nd National FFA Convention, held Oct. 28 - Nov. 1, set a convention record of over 70,000 members and guests in attendance with the event having an economic impact of $39.8 million for the city of Indianapolis. Those in attendance came from across the United States, representing all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The convention took place at several venues in downtown Indianapolis and the surrounding area. The Convention and expo kicked off with the FFA band leading a grand march into the Lucas Oil Stadium on Oct. 28. The march signaled the start of the opening session. It was there that SC FFA members had the opportunity to hear from Bob Goff, former lawyer and honorary consul to Uganda and motivational speaker Michelle Poler. At the Indianapolis Convention Center, FFA members explored the expo or expanded their minds by attending a variety of workshops or participating in educational and career success tours.

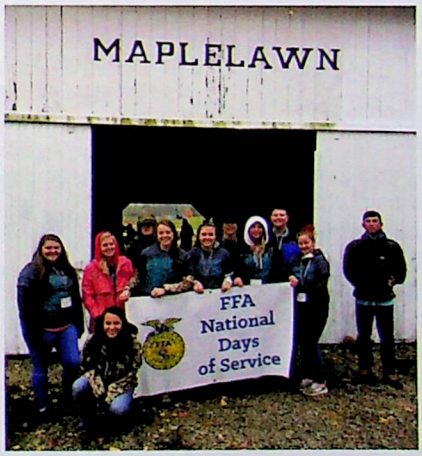
Throughout the week, FFA members experienced the Blue Room, a 17,000-square-foot interactive area that showcases the cutting-edge technology, research and innovation taking place in agriculture. AgriNovus Indiana and Microsoft were the title sponsors of this experience.

State officers volunteered at Stuckey Apple Farm to pick produce for those in need in the Indianapolis area.

SC FFA members had the chance to participate in a variety of experiences while in Indianapolis, including outstanding concerts by Old Dominion and Brett Young, the Indianapolis Speedway, the Indianapolis Zoo and participating in the National Day of Service.



Bryson Middle FFA members practiced hands-on learning at an interactive welding simulation sponsored by Hobart Institute of Welding Technology.



Barnwell County Career Center spent a chilly afternoon participating in the Day of Service at Maple Lawn Farm.

SC FFA members competed in 20 National Career Development Events (CDE) and Leadership Development Events (LDE) throughout the week. Clover FFA earned a gold emblem in Horse Evaluation CDE, Manning Middle earned a Silver Emblem in the Conduct of Chapter LDE. Christina Knotts, Belton-Honea Path FFA, was awarded a silver emblem in Employment Skills. Kylie Cathcart from Lexington-Richland 5 FFA, was awarded a silver emblem in Extemporaneous Public Speaking. Parliamentary Procedure Team, from Crestwood FFA, received a silver emblem and Aynor FFA received a silver emblem in the Forestry CDE. In addition, 10 AgriScience fair projects placed at the National level with Cayden Gates of the Nation Ford FFA Chapter, being the National winner of Animal Systems Division 5. Other SC FFA highlights include five South Carolina FFA chapters, Buford, Clover, Crescent, Crestwood and Loris FFA, receiving 3-Star National Chapter Awards.

Eleven South Carolina FFA members were awarded their American Degree at the eighth general session, held at Lucas Oil Stadium Saturday morning. A record 4,353 FFA members received their American FFA Degree, which is the highest degree an FFA members can earn.

The National FFA Convention & Expo is scheduled to be held in Indianapolis through 2031.

A Loris FFA member got to bond with a few alpacas at the Expo.

Clover Middle School Charters New Chapter

Clover Middle FFA member Madelyn Bolin and her advisor, Keisha Robinson, sign the FFA Charter, making Clover Middle officially an FFA program.

By Jillian Lash

In 1917, the Smith Hughes Act was passed to give federal funding for vocational programs. Through this funding, agriculture education began and thus the initial stages of our great youth organization called the FFA. In 1928, a group of 33 farm boys from across the nation gathered in Kansas City, Mo., at the Baltimore Hotel at the first National FFA Convention.

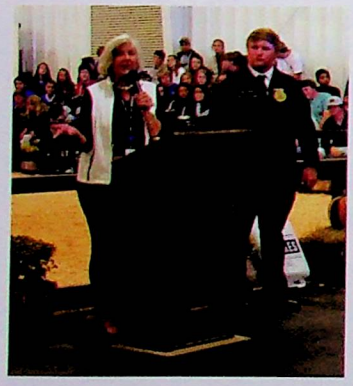
We are pleased to announce that in the fall of 2019 the SC FFA association has chartered one more chapter: **Clover Middle School.**

The Clover Middle FFA Chapter is about to embark on a journey whose destination has no end. We commend them on their willingness to become a chapter in this amazing organization. The door is now open and all they have to do is walk through it. We welcome you to the South Carolina FFA Association and the National FFA Organization.

"Prize Winning Memories" are made at the 2019 State Fair FFA Day

By Jillian Lash

On October 16th, hundreds of FFA members and advisors gathered in the Nutt Cattle Arena for the Association of State Fairs Scholarship ceremony and to be welcomed to the 2019 State Fair by Nancy Smith, General Manager.



After the ceremony, FFA members had the chance to participate in or watch the Tractor Operation and Safety Career Development Event, visit livestock, explore horticulture exhibits and simply enjoy the food and fun that the State Fair has to offer.

The State Fair has a long-standing tradition of successfully promoting the FFA. The State Fair hosted the organizational meeting of the Future Palmetto Farmers at the 1927 fair. This was the forerunner of the South Carolina Association of Future Farmers of America, known today as the South Carolina FFA Association.

SC FFA Members Attend the CAFLS Alumni Tailgate

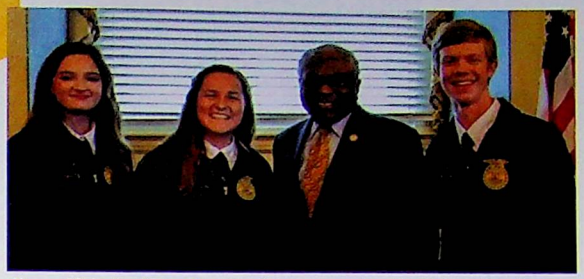
By Jillian Lash

The College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences (CAFLS) Alumni Tailgate remains a tradition for many SC FFA members. The annual event allows FFA agricultural education students the opportunity to travel to Clemson University and experience true Tiger hospitality. Students are provided the opportunity to explore all opportunities that are available to them through CAFLS as they visit displays and interactive booths both in and outside Fike Recreation Center representing organizations and departments from CAFLS. In addition, the tailgate had a brief onstage program which included comments from Clemson President James Clements, Dr. Louis Lynn, member of the Clemson Board of Trustees; Dr. Keith Belli, dean of CAFLS; Dr. George Askew, Vice President of Clemson PSA, along with other key Clemson and SC Agriculture officials.

After enjoying the festivities of the tailgate, SC FFA members attended the Clemson vs. Wofford football game to root on their Tigers.

State Officers Advocate for Agriculture Education on Capitol Hill

By Jillian Lash



House Majority Whip, Rep. Jim Clyburn meets with Sydney Gambrell, Virginia Kackley and Matthew Brownlee to discuss the importance of agriculture education.

The state officers attended a three-day advocacy training experience in Washington, D.C., this summer that is open to all 375 state FFA officers nationwide. Training focused on serving as an advocate for agriculture and FFA, as well as developing clear and consistent messages related to agriculture and FFA. The officers toured the Washington monuments and the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History.

The FDR Memorial, Lincoln Memorial and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial plus others were included on the memorial night tour of Washington DC.

Congressional visits are the culminating experience of the State Officer Summit. The state officers discussed the importance of recruitment and retention of agriculture educators in South Carolina with Rep. Jim Clyburn, Rep. Joe Wilson and a member of Rep. Ralph Norman's staff.

South Carolina FFA State Convention Moves to Greenville

By Jillian Lash

The SC FFA Convention has seen exponential growth over the last ten years. It was not too long ago that convention attendance barely reached 500 members. A convention that now host approximately 1,000 members each June. This growth has led to the 2020 State FFA Convention being moved to the Greenville Convention Center.

With new chapters being chartered every year, moving to the convention center will allow for room for continued growth of the organization. The move will also allow for multiple student workshops and a career and college expo all at one site. The SC FFA is looking forward to the many opportunities that the new site has to offer.

Agricultural Education Hires New Staff

By Billy Keels

Two new hires with the Clemson University Agricultural Education staff started on July 15.

Frank Saldana assumed the duties of the **Regional Coordinator** over **Regions III** and **IV**. He most recently served with the National FFA as the Local Program Specialist for the Southeast Region, where he served to advise agricultural education programs in 11 states on curriculum, developing partnerships and program building as well as monitor initiatives and trends from both the National FFA and USDE. He also has served as the executive director of the National FFA Alumni Association and the director of Leadership Development Programs, with the National FFA.

Prior to his working with the National FFA, Saldana taught agriculture for eleven years in Texas.

Saldana has a BS Degree in Agricultural Education and a master's degree in School Administration, both from Texas A&I University (Texas A&M – Kingsville). He has been awarded both the Honorary American Degree and the VIP Citation from the National FFA.

Saldana is housed at the SC FFA Camp in North Myrtle Beach.

Troy Helms assumed the duties of the **Regional Coordinator** over **Regions I** and **II.**

Helms had a successful teaching career in South Carolina, spanning 17 years. He began his teaching career in 2002 at Indian Land High School, where he taught agriculture for seven years, along with Jerry Davis. In 2009, Helms moved to Buford High School, where he taught Agriculture for 10 years.

Helms has demonstrated success in the classroom, the FFA and has experience in working with both Young Farmers and adult education. Helms won many awards during his teaching tenure, most notably, he was named Lancaster County District Teacher of the Year in 2018, SC Region III Outstanding Agriculture Educator in 2019 and his chapter received a gold emblem award in National Chapter in 2019 at the State FFA Convention. Helms also served as a National DuPont Agriscience Ambassador for South Carolina.

Helms is housed at the Lancaster County Extension Service office.

2019 SC Agricultural Teachers Conference held in Beaufort

By Billy Keels

Battery Creek High School in Beaufort County played host to agriculture teachers from across the state at the 2019 South Carolina Agricultural Education Teachers Conference held in July.

Teachers were welcomed to Battery Creek High School by Principal Chad Cox during the general session. This session also provided an opportunity for remarks from Jillian Lash, SC FFA Executive Director, with updates on SC FFA, and Billy Keels, state director of Agricultural Education, who introduced newly hired Agricultural Education staff members Frank Saldana, who will serve as the Region III and IV coordinator, and Troy Helms, who will serve as the Region I and II coordinator. In addition, teachers were provided an update from Nina Crutchfield, LPS Specialist, with updates from National FFA. In addition, teachers were provided information on the Adopt-a-Stream program from Delany Lann, with Clemson Extension. David Vaughn, with SC DHEC, discussed a cooperative effort between SC DHEC and Agricultural Education to provide jobs for students who are trained in soils identification and classification.

The remainder of the conference was focused on providing educational programs for the teachers in attendance to prepare them for the coming school year. Teachers had an opportunity to choose from a variety of workshops, which covered such topics as AgriScience Fair, a Livestock Clinic, Farmer and Agribusiness Chapter management, FFA Chapter management, Agronomy, Forestry and proper use of social media.

The SCAAE Banquet, which is always a highlight of the conference, was held at the beautiful Callawassie Golf Club. At the banquet, the SCAAE presented awards and recognition to deserving teachers from across the state for their success in the classroom as well as recognition of those who provided support to agricultural education in South Carolina.

The South Carolina Agricultural Educators Conference is held annually to provide in-service to agricultural educators to ensure that they are kept up-to-date with developments in both education and the agricultural industry.

2019 SC Association of Agricultural Educators Awards

SCAAE Teacher Turn the Key Professional Scholarship
Ben Teal
McBee High School

SCAAE Outstanding Early Career Educator
Beth Ann Melton
Battery Creek High School

SCAAE Outstanding Mentor of the Year
Christina Addis
Seneca High School

John W. Parris Agricultural Leadership Award
Dr. Kathy Coleman
Director, Sandhills REC

SCAAE Outstanding Postsecondary Program
Tastefully Local
***Lee Petitgout**, Advisor*

Clark Woods Distinguished Teacher Award
Brenda Wright
Blue Ridge High School

SCAAE Outstanding Secondary School Program
Laurens High School
***Melanie Birchmore & Kyle Penland**, Advisors*

SCAAE Ideas Unlimited
Robert Bollier
Lexington Technology Center

Dr. Kathy Coleman Awarded Prestigious John W. Parris Award

By Billy Keels

The South Carolina Association of Agriculture Educators recognized Dr. Kathy Coleman, director of the Clemson Sandhill Research and Education Center, with the coveted John W. Parris Agricultural Leadership Award. Coleman received this honor during the annual Summer Conference of the SCAAE.

Coleman serves as the director of the Clemson University Sandhill Research and Education Center and previously served as associate director of State Governmental Affairs for Clemson for 29 years. In addition, she serves on the Saluda County School Board. She is also a past-president of the South Carolina School Boards Association.

Dr. Coleman receives the John W. Parris award from Dr. Tom Dobbins, director of the Clemson Univeristy Cooperative Extension Service.

During her work with Governmental Affairs with Clemson University, Coleman has demonstrated her support of agriculture education by assisting in securing funds for agricultural teachers for the extended contracts from the state legislature. In addition, she has worked to secure funds for the FFA Camp, teacher support material, Agricultural Education staff positions and numerous other projects that support agricultural education.

As director of the Sandhill Research and Education Center, Coleman provided office and meeting space for the Agricultural Education staff, teachers, students and Farmer and Agribusiness Association members through the years.

The John W. Parris Agricultural Leadership Award is the most esteemed recognition presented by the South Carolina Association of Agricultural Educators. This award was established by the association and named in honor of Parris of Columbia, a nationally recognized leader in agriculture and natural resource conservation with more than 50 years of professional service.

Brenda Wright Retires

by Gayle Posipanko

Brenda Wright, a Greenville County native, recently retired after saying she would never teach. Clark Woods changed her mind after student teaching with him at Hillcrest High School. "What sold me on that was the light that went on in the students' eyes when they really got it," says Wright. Not feeling like she had enough practical experience to start in the classroom, Wright started working at a retail market selling plants and produce. Soon the USDA hired her to work in the Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS) as a Soil Conservationist out of the Gaffney, SC office for the next two years. The next 3 years were spent teaching at Hillcrest High School. She then finished her 28 year career at Blue Ridge High School.

Wright started at Clemson University in 1982 in Civil Engineering and finished her BS there in December 1987 after changing her major to Agriculture Education. Wright completed her Masters in Agriculture Education in 2001.

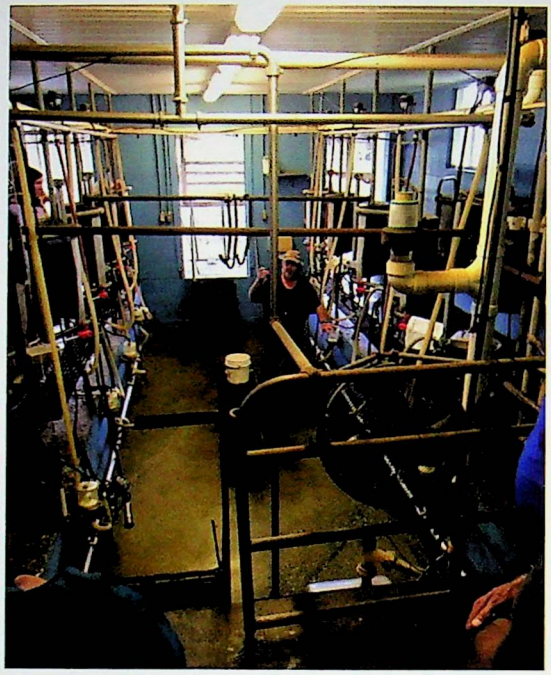
Highlights from her teaching career include being recognized by the Greenville County School Board, the SC House and the SC Senate for being the Region and State SCAAE Outstanding Young Member in 1996-97. In 1998-99 she was named the Blue Ridge High School Teacher of the Year and the Greenville County Conservation Teacher of the Year. Wright has received the Honorary Chapter Degree from Hillcrest and her Honorary SC State Degree in 1994-95. She was awarded the Teacher of Teachers for Randi Baxley. Her most coveted award was being named the Clark Woods Distinguished Teacher in 2019.

Wright served the South Carolina Association of Agriculture Educators for many years. She moved up the ranks from Region 1 Vice President in 1999-2000 and 2000-2001, SCAAE President Elect, SCAAE President and SCAAE Past President in 2003-2004. Most recently Wright was named SCYFAA Advisor of the Year in 2018-19.

Wright and her husband of nearly 20 years, Jason, presently live in Greer. She is a member of the Tyger River Farmer and Agribusiness Chapter, and a nonprofit organization called the Dark Corner Ag Alliance. Along with serving on the Greenville County Farm Bureau Board, she also serves in many capacities in her church. When asked her fondest memory of teaching, she merely replied, "There are so many." On behalf of the agriculture teachers from across the state of South Carolina, we feel the same about you.

SC Farmer and Agribusiness Association Tours Historic Abbeville County

By Troy Helms



A great crowd of 230 SC Farmer and Agribusiness Association members, advisors, sponsors and their families arrived in Abbeville County for the Annual SCYAA Summer Farm Tour July 26-27. The Abbeville County Farmer and Agribusiness Chapter, along with advisors Katie Finley, Nancy McCannon and Josh Murdock hosted the tour. Chapter Members along with local FFA students led the efforts in ensuring that all guests were properly registered and in planning of all meals and tour stops.

The Friday tour stops included McPhail Tree Farm, a pine production operation in Abbeville County, Southern Oaks Farm and Creamery, a small all-Jersey dairy farm located in rural Abbeville County that produces and sells Grade-A raw milk to farm markets, grocery stores and private families and concluded at John de la Howe School, which is slated to open in 2020 as a residential school for agriculture. John de la Howe hosted all attendees for the evening meal where greetings were brought to the attendees from representatives of John de la Howe school, the mayor of McCormick, Rep. Randy Ligon and Sen. Danny Verdin, as well as those who helped in sponsoring the event.

The Saturday tour stops included a tour of Charlie's Creek Nursery, which has over 500 acres of landscape plants that are balled and burlaped and marketed throughout the United States, The Farm on Blueberry Hill, a blueberry farm noted for its quality blueberries and products produced from them, Amos Cunningham Mine, near Due West known for beryl crystals, amethyst and smoky quartz, as well as shopping in the city square of historic Abbeville. The tour concluded with a visit and lunch at the farm of Fred Raines, retired agriculture teacher at Abbeville High.

The Abbeville County Summer Tour was educational, well-planned, family friendly, and will be remembered by all who attended. The tour highlighted the diversity of Agriculture in and around Abbeville.

T.E.A.M. C.O.W

By Jillian Lash

The SC FFA State Officers held their annual **Chapter Opportunity Workshops** this fall. 570 chapters officers from 75 chapters participated in the afterschool workshop. The State Officers focused on how officers can effectively work together as a team. Activities included understanding commitment, respect, being on point and vulnerability. All important factors that make an officer team successful.

R.D. Anderson, Clinton High School, Darlington Institute of Technology and Edisto High School served as host for this year's workshops.

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Brodie had always loved the outdoors, plants — and FFA. When he came to Clemson he found that all his interests could come together in one even bigger passion — feeding the world.

At Clemson, Brodie conducted research on plant pathology with professors who shared his goals. He then applied that research to the campus' Tiger Gardens where he also taught nutrition and sustainability. Brodie is now in graduate school, with plans to travel to third-world countries to help them solve their food crises.

It's a big task. But with knowledge, enthusiasm and the support of his mentors, Brodie is up to the challenge.

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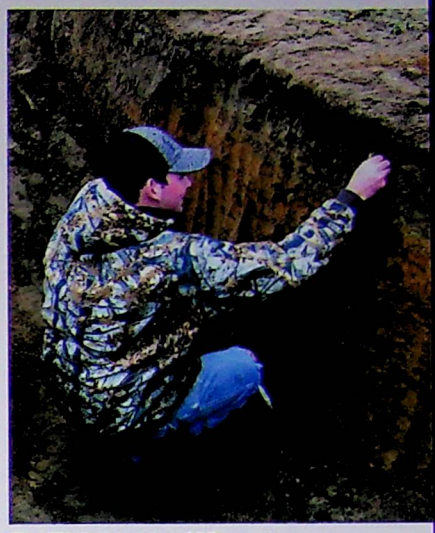
Learn more about Brodie's story at *clemson.edu/moments.*

FFA, DHEC and Clemson Working Together

By David Vaughn
Director, Division of Onsite Wastewater, Rabies Prevention and Enforcement
SC Department of Health and Environmental Control

In areas where public sewer is not available, onsite wastewater (septic) systems play a major role in development. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's (DHEC) onsite wastewater (OSWW) program is responsible for the permitting and evaluation of septic systems. This job relies heavily upon skills related to assessing soil conditions. In considering these skill sets, it was realized that the FFA offers a program that promotes the development of these abilities. To be able to recruit from an area that develops the talents that we are looking for, DHEC has partnered with the FFA. The department's OSWW positions are located in our regional offices throughout the state. Prime candidates for these positions have a soils background as well as soils judging experience. The department is in the process of developing a certification program with the help of Clemson University for high school students who are interested in soil science. The soil science certification will consist of studies in soil and water conservation, agricultural science and technology, and soil research. Students who receive this certification may qualify for positions within the Onsite Wastewater program at DHEC. DHEC and the FFA are very excited to provide another avenue for increasing student employability with the agency. The goal for the program's debut of the soil science certification is Fall 2020.

We encourage students to consider becoming an OSWW inspector. Being an OSWW inspector is a very rewarding experience. The position is one that helps the people of South Carolina while protecting our state's natural resources. Once an applicant applies for a permit, a DHEC inspector will visit the property in order to determine if the property is suitable for a septic system. The key factors are soil type, slope of the land, number of bedrooms in the proposed home, location of the system regarding items such as other structures, private wells, surface waters, property lines, drainage ditches, etc. It is a challenging position that requires strong problem-solving skills, critical thinking and self-motivation. A position as an OSWW inspector allows someone to develop their knowledge of soil science, land use and design layout skills.



The FFA Soil Judging CDE provides training to help prepare students for careers with DHEC.

A position in DHEC's OSWW program can be a challenging and rewarding career for those motivated to think outside the box and who enjoy helping people while protecting our natural resources and the environment. The position offers the opportunity to learn and grow in the soils field, the freedom of working outdoors and the rewards of public service. If this appeals to you, then we encourage you to apply. Qualified applicants interested in an OSWW position can apply online at www.governmentjobs.com.

Pelion FFA Assists Commissioner of Ag in Hosting U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

Contributed by Jesse Zeaser, Advisor Pelion FFA Chapter

South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers and his wife, Blanche, opened up their home to host a fundraiser in support of the South Carolina Commissioner's School for Agriculture. The fundraiser also had two very special guests, United State Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Purdue and Clemson University President James Clements.

The Pelion FFA Chapter officers assisted in hosting the event. The officers had the opportunity to meet with Perdue, Clements, Weathers and the many distinguished guests in attendance.

The Pelion FFA officer team with United States Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue (left) and President of Clemson University Jim Clements (right)

The South Carolina Commissioner's School for Agriculture is a partnership between Clemson University and the South Carolina Department of Agriculture. This program is designed to inform, inspire and challenge student participants to consider a career in the agricultural, natural resource and life science industries. Throughout the years many FFA members from South Carolina have participated in the premier career and leadership development summer program.

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